

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the claims will replace all prior listings, and versions, of the claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1-16. (canceled)

Claim 17. (currently amended) An instrument holder assembly for laparoscopic surgical operations,

said instrument holder assembly having an insertion configuration for insertion of said instrument holder assembly through an incision in a patient for at least partial insertion of said instrument holder assembly into a patient cavity, and an in use configuration for use of said instrument holder assembly for access to said patient cavity, said instrument holder assembly comprising:

a flexible member having a surrounding edge;

an at least partially flexible wall surrounding said flexible member, said at least partially flexible wall being connected to said flexible member all along said edge, said at least partially flexible wall having a longitudinal axis, said flexible member extending substantially transversely to said axis, said at least partially flexible wall extending away from said flexible member at least in a direction away from a patient; and

a plurality of cannulas connected to and extending from said flexible member inside said at least partially flexible wall,

said cannulas defining a plurality of separate and mutually spaced apertures for receiving respective elongate laparoscopic surgical members[.],

wherein, for the insertion configuration, the flexible member and the at least partially flexible wall are ~~configured so as to enable the instrument holder assembly, for the insertion configuration, to be folded into a compact configuration wherein the at least partially flexible wall has a compressible cross-sectional dimension, for the insertion of said holder assembly, said compressible cross-sectional dimension along the longitudinal axis of said at least partially flexible wall being less than a dimension of the incision in a patient where said at least partially flexible wall extends~~ at least partially through the incision in a patient.

Claim 18. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said flexible member and said at least partially flexible wall each have a height dimension extending parallel to said axis, the height dimension of said at least partially flexible wall being substantially greater than the height dimension of said flexible member.

Claim 19. (canceled)

Claim 20. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said at least partially flexible wall has at least one end portion extending as a flange to said flexible member on the side of said flexible member opposite the patient.

Claim 21. (currently amended) An instrument holder assembly for laparoscopic surgical operations,

said instrument holder assembly having an insertion configuration for insertion of said instrument holder assembly through an incision in a patient for at least partial insertion of said instrument holder assembly into a patient cavity, and an in use configuration for use of said instrument holder assembly for access to said patient cavity, said instrument holder assembly comprising:

a flexible member having a surrounding edge; and

an at least partially flexible wall surrounding said flexible member, said at least partially flexible wall being connected to said flexible member all along said edge, said at least partially flexible wall having a longitudinal axis, said flexible member extending substantially transversely to said axis,

said flexible member being provided with a plurality of cannulas connected to and extending from said flexible member inside said at least partially flexible wall, said cannulas defining a plurality of separate apertures for receiving respective elongate laparoscopic surgical members,

wherein, in the in use configuration, said at least partially flexible wall has two end portions extending as endless or perimetrical flanges to said flexible member, said end portions extending in opposite directions away from said flexible member, and

wherein, for the insertion configuration, the flexible member and the at least

~~partially flexible wall are configured so as to enable the instrument holder assembly, for the insertion configuration, to be folded into a compact configuration wherein the at least partially flexible wall has a compressible cross-sectional dimension, for the insertion of said holder assembly, said compressible cross-sectional dimension along the longitudinal axis of said at least partially flexible wall being less than a dimension of the incision in a patient where said at least partially flexible wall extends at least partially through the incision in a patient.~~

Claim 22. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 20 wherein said flexible member is located at one end of said at least partially flexible wall.

Claim 23. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said flexible member is located at one end of said at least partially flexible wall.

Claim 24. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said flexible member and said at least partially flexible wall form two cup shapes.

Claim 25. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said at least partially flexible wall has a first inner diameter at said flexible member and a second inner diameter at an end opposite said flexible member, said second inner diameter being larger than said first inner diameter.

Claims 26-28. (canceled)

Claim 29. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein the cannula and instrument holder assembly consists of said flexible member and said at least partially flexible wall.

Claims 30-31. (canceled)

Claim 32. (previously presented) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17

wherein said apertures have a longitudinal dimension extending generally parallel to said axis, at least one of said apertures having a curvilinear or arced shape along the longitudinal dimension of said one of said apertures.

Claim 33. (canceled)

Claim 34. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said at least partially flexible wall is at least partially curved in a direction parallel to said longitudinal axis.

Claim 35. (canceled)

Claim 36. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said at least partially flexible wall is provided with an anchoring element for securing the instrument holder assembly to a patient, said anchoring element being taken from the group consisting of a hook and an eyelet.

Claims 37-40. (canceled)

Claim 41. (previously presented) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17 wherein said cannulas all extend in a common direction away from said flexible member so that said cannulas are all disposed on only one side of said flexible member.

Claim 42. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17, wherein the instrument holder assembly is ~~configured to be~~ inflatable and deflatable.

Claim 43. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 42, wherein the instrument holder assembly is ~~configured to be inflatable~~ inflated when in the insertion configuration to assume the in use configuration.

Claim 44. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 20, wherein the at least partially flexible wall is substantially rigid in a region about the flexible member and flexible at least in a distal region of the at least partially flexible wall

inside the patient cavity that is spaced from the flexible member.

Claim 45. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 44, configured wherein, when the instrument holder assembly is in the in use configuration, the distal region of the at least partially flexible wall is ~~enabled to be~~ inside the patient cavity.

Claim 46. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 17, wherein said at least partially flexible wall extending away from said flexible member at least in a direction away from a patient thereby defines together with said flexible member, in the in use configuration, a cup shape on a side of said flexible member opposite the patient.

Claim 47. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 21, wherein the instrument holder assembly is ~~configured to be~~ inflatable and deflatable.

Claim 48. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 21, wherein the instrument holder assembly is ~~configured to be inflatable~~ inflated when in the insertion configuration to assume the in use configuration.

Claim 49. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 21, wherein the at least partially flexible wall is substantially rigid in a region about the flexible member and flexible at least in a distal region of the at least partially flexible wall that is spaced from the flexible member.

Claim 50. (currently amended) The instrument holder assembly defined in claim 49, configured wherein, when the instrument holder assembly is in the in use configuration, the distal region of the at least partially flexible wall is ~~enabled to be~~ inside the patient cavity.

Claim 51. (currently amended) An instrument holder assembly comprising:
an annular body member; and

a plurality of tapered funnel-shaped port elements each defining a plurality of cross-sectional diameters and each of said plurality of tapered funnel-shaped port elements connected to said body member and extending proximally in a common direction therefrom, the taper of each of said tapered funnel-shaped port elements decreasing the plurality of cross-sectional diameters in the proximal direction.